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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO

No. 25

In Memory of
L. BRADFORD PRINCE
President of the
Society

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OF
NEW MEXICO

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In Memory of
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To account for this publication it should be stated that at the annual meeting of the Historical Society, in November, 1923, it was unanimously ordered that the address of Frank W. Clancy, delivered at a meeting held on the 23rd day of April, 1923, together with the Resolutions of the Board of Regents of the State Museum, both relating to Hon. L. Bradford Prince, be published as a bulletin of the Society, which is now accordingly done as follows:

Address by Mr. Clancy

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Although it has been some months since the painful event occurred, this is the first opportunity when announcement could be made to our society of the loss which it has sustained in the death of our president, L. Bradford Prince, who for nearly 40 years was the sustaining influence and the soul of the Historical Society of New Mexico. That this has not been sooner made an occasion of commemoration by us of so great a man, is to be attributed to the fact that our loss has had such an absolutely paralyzing effect upon our activities not only as a society, but as individuals, that it has not been possible at any earlier moment to give expression to our feelings of the loss which our society has sustained, and as well the commonwealth of New Mexico at large, but some record of those feelings must be made by the society to which he so long devoted his great talents, energy and ability, after he cast his lot with the people of New Mexico.

It seems to devolve upon me, as vice-president of our society, and as a close and intimate friend of our late president for many years, to attempt to present to you and to the public, some appropriate recognition of his great character and record as a man, a publicist, a jurist, and especially as the steadfast friend through all his lifetime after he came to New Mexico, of our people with whom he made his home and with whom he identified himself in every possible honorable and unselfish way. I feel that I can not do justice to the subject, but I can not avoid responding to what seems to be a call of duty, from the varying standpoints of public citizenship and personal friendship.

To attempt here to make anything like a record of his career and varied achievements is simply impossible. For me to make a mere enumeration of all that he did, of all that he accomplished in public office, of all that he gave to the public in the way of literary authorship, and of what he gave of himself in many ways to the general welfare, would make a book of hundreds of pages, and would be inappropriate here and would exhaust your patience.

He was born in Flushing, Long Island, in June, 1840 and died at the same place, which had been the home of the Prince family for generations, December 8, 1922, so that he was in his 83rd year at the time of his death, and his public activities which began while he was still a boy, continued until the year of his death. He organized political committees before he was 21 years of age, and while, as before stated, it is useless to at-

tempt even a mere enumeration of all that he accomplished, yet mention must be made of a few things.

He wrote, before he graduated from the law school of Columbia university, a book of 125 pages, which was published by G. P. Putnam & Son in 1867, entitled, "E Pluribus Unum, or American Nationality," and was both historical and political in the proper sense of that word, and reviewed our early attempts at government, beginning with colonial times down to and through the chaotic period of the Articles of Confederation, which led to the formation of our Constitution, expounded that Constitution, and told of our great growth and prosperity thereunder, all in a most wonderful and masterly manner, so that it might well be reproduced in whole or in part, with great benefit at the present time, when attacks are made upon our time-honored Constitution by so many different kinds of honest but misguided minds, from the anarchist and socialist, who sees nothing but evil in all existing forms of government and would destroy them by violence if necessary, and they say it is necessary, to those who call themselves merely progressive and would change and destroy by piecemeal here and there, apparently unconscious of the destructive nature of their efforts. This little book received unstinted praise from many of the men of that day, such as Henry Wilson, Zach Chandler, Millard Fillmore, Reuben E. Fenton, Schuyler Colfax, George William Curtis and even Roscoe Conkling, although later he became personally hostile to Mr. Prince, and was perhaps the principal cause of his leaving New York to come to New Mexico.

His public career in the political arena began in 1871, when he was elected, and later again and again re-elected, as a Republican from a strongly democratic district to the legislature of the state of New York, where he served with distinction, especially in connection with securing needed amendments to the constitution of the state in 1874, and the impeachment of dishonest judges of the worst period of official corruption in the state.

If he had remained in New York, there is no flight of imagination which can reach the possibilities—the probabilities—of what he might have attained in national politics. Even after he came to New Mexico, again and again he was urged by his former associates to return to New York, with the certainty, as they believed, that he could go to congress as a representative or even as a senator, from the Empire state; but he early became so fascinated and even infatuated with New Mexico and its people, that he turned a deaf ear to all such urgings.

In the '70s of the 19th century, Roscoe Conkling was the dominant political power in New York, and while in some

ways he was a great man, of varied talents, he demanded from his party abject and servile obedience, was petulant and childishly vindictive towards all who would not bow the knee to Conkling, and Mr. Prince was not one of that kind, so that when opportunity presented itself for him to get away from New York, it seemed then the part of wisdom to embrace that opportunity. The dominance and downfall of Conkling, due to the qualities above mentioned, are a part of the political history of our country, and need not be considered now.

In 1878 the president offered to appoint Mr. Prince governor of the territory of Idaho, but he conceived a prejudice against Idaho, after calling upon the delegate from that territory, and finding him without shoes and with his wool-clad feet obtrusively elevated to a highly unornamental position, and declined the appointment. This was not perhaps altogether reasonable, as that delegate may not have been a fair representative of the people of his territory. Shortly thereafter the president appointed him chief justice of New Mexico, and he arrived in Santa Fe in the winter of 1878-79. From that time on he was a prominent and active part of New Mexico, giving his time and great abilities to everything which could tend to the development of his adopted land.

As a judge, with six counties over the district courts of which he presided, there had not been, nor has there been since, anyone in such a position in New Mexico who disposed of so much business in the same length of time. My personal acquaintance with him began in 1879. I became clerk of his court in the summer of that year, and so continued until he resigned in 1882, and thereafter until March, 1883.

His only fault as a judge, if it were a fault, was in the excessive amount of work which he performed and imposed upon the members of the bar and court officers. He was never harsh or inconsiderate of litigants or their lawyers. I remember having seen, more than once in the district court in the old town of Las Vegas, when counsel asked for time to get a witness or client from the other side of the Gallinas, that he would grant the request, but in order to expedite business, he would empanel another jury for the trial of a different case and proceed therewith until the absentee arrived, when the trial of the first case would be resumed.

At that term in Las Vegas he opened court at 8 in the morning, adjourned from 12 to 1 to permit the eating of a mid-day meal, and from 6 to 7 for supper, and never stopped before 11 at night. He was always alert, and apparently untired, but everyone else was worn out.

My personal belief is that no judge should hold court much beyond five hours in a day, as with long hours, the bench,

the bar and jury are not fit to do their best work, and therefore I do not wholly approve of Judge Prince's judicial record; but it was characteristic of the man to do so much work in a limited time and do it so well. It is difficult to understand how any man could do so much of a high order of merit as he did. An instance of this is to be found in what he did quite soon after he became chief justice.

There had been a compilation of the statutes of New Mexico in 1865, which, although poorly done and badly arranged, was the book of reference of all statutes in existence in 1865, but after that there had been many sessions of the legislature, at each of which numerous statutes were enacted, and in 1879 and 1880 it was very difficult to procure a copy of the compiled laws of 1865, and almost impossible to secure a complete set of the session laws adopted after 1865. And yet Judge Prince, within a year and a half after he became judge, prepared and had published a compilation of all laws then in force, and that book was the only standard as to our statutes for the guidance of territorial and county officers, of the courts and of all the bar until some time in 1885, when the compilation of 1884 became available. I never heard of any complaint of the completeness or accuracy of Prince's compilation, and no one could understand how he found the time to do such work. A story was circulated that he did it all on the train between Santa Fe and New York, whither he went when the courts were not in session. At that time it took 48 hours—often more—to go from Santa Fe to Kansas City, and nearly as much more from there to New York. When we reflect upon the rapidity and accuracy with which that work was done, we may be able to understand, or if not to understand, to believe that he did so much work that most of men would have required a lifetime of continuous labor to accomplish. Among other things, he found time to write a history of New Mexico which is a standard work and constantly referred to by all writers on New Mexico history, and a little later the Student's History of New Mexico, which might be well adopted as a part of the curriculum of all schools in the state, and which ought, at least, to be in the library of every educational institution, including all high schools.

He wrote a book of nearly 400 pages on the "Spanish Mission Churches of New Mexico," which is a treasure-house of information on a subject to which no other before him had given more than slight attention. He wrote interesting and erudite monographs on "The Stone Lions of Cochiti," and "Old Fort Marcy," and a historical review of "The Struggle for Statehood 1850 to 1910," and a bewildering number of magazine articles and letters to the press on New Mexican

subjects, which required an enormous amount of time, research and labor, difficult of belief when we consider the immense amount of time which he gave to so many other fields of work, such as the Trans-Mississippi congress, of which he was president in 1892, 1893, and 1899, the International Mining congress, of which he was vice-president in 1900-03, and in every thing connected with the Protestant Episcopal church, of which he was an untiring and devoted member, whether in national or local affairs. As I have already said, it seems an unnecessary and difficult task to attempt to enumerate the many things which he did, and all so wonderfully well.

It is much better to turn our attention to his individual characteristics as a man, in contact with his fellow beings, which so greatly endeared him to all who knew him.

First, I invite you to consider that from the very beginning of his life in New Mexico, he never failed when opportunity offered to raise his voice, or use his pen, in defense of our people of Spanish descent, against the unjust and villainous attacks upon them made by English-speaking persons inspired by ignorance and ignoble race prejudice, against a kindly, hospitable, open-hearted people, who have from 1846 received and treated the gringos who came here as their conquerors and oppressors with a degree of forbearance and toleration which is almost incredible. He thoroughly appreciated their good traits and, with that sense of justice which was always a part of his nature, he was ever ready in every possible way to give expression to his feelings in their behalf. This is only one evidence of his just and kindly nature, which was readily aroused by any exhibition of dishonesty and unfairness, whether in the form of the disgraceful neglect by our national government to keep its promises, of which a most glaring instance can be found in the failure to pay what are known as the French Spoliation Claims, as to which he made a violent and memorable attack and protest, or in the form of intolerance, political, religious or racial.

This naturally leads one to the consideration of his toleration of every form of honest opinion, no matter how divergent from his own. He was one of the most devoted and zealous members of the Episcopal church in the United States, taking an active and leading part in all concerns of that church, national or local, from early youth to the end of his life, yet he was never known to say an unkindly word, nor can anyone who knew him believe that he ever harbored even an unkindly thought as to any other form of honest religious belief.

He was a total abstainer from alcoholic or even vinous liquors, but he never said a word or had a thought of criticism of those whose habits of life were different from his own. He

never sought to impose upon any fellow being his own standard or conduct as that to which others must conform, whether by moral suasion or by legislative mandate.

He was a Republican in politics from conviction based upon fundamental principles of political thought, but he was never harsh or unfair to his adversaries, and as to this I feel moved to become reminiscent. He believed in party politics and party organization as the safeguard of our institutions and form of government. In 1882, while he was judge, prompted by his years of success in politics in New York, he conceived the idea that he might reasonably hope to get the nomination for delegate to congress in that year, but believing that there would be gross impropriety in seeking other and political office while occupying a judicial position, an idea which has since been embodied to some extent in our state constitution, which declares that no judge shall be nominated or elected to any other than a judicial office, he resigned his office as judge with the avowed purpose of seeking the nomination for delegate to congress.

The convention to make the nomination was held in the new town of Albuquerque, which was then in its beginning, and he was defeated by what his supporters believed to be unfair and dishonest tactics of the opposition. After the nomination was made, there was an assembly of his disappointed and angry supporters in an unfinished storeroom, somewhere north of Railroad avenue, and there were many loud and vociferous appeals to him to run as an independent candidate, but after listening until the angry ones had somewhat talked themselves out, he addressed them something like this, for I cannot recall his exact language, "No, gentlemen, I cannot do that; I am a republican and believe in party organization, and to preserve that organization is of more importance than the gratification of any man's individual ambition. I cannot be an independent candidate." His calm words quieted the angry excitement and the junta soon dispersed.

Two years later he was the regular nominee of the republican convention, but a defeated candidate from the southern end of New Mexico, who had not had the political party education or training which New York had given Judge Prince, but looked on a political contest as one of purely personal character, with his friends bolted and made a campaign as an independent candidate without any reasonable hope of success, and thereby defeated Judge Prince, who lost by a plurality of about a thousand only, and thereafter until 1894, New Mexico was steadily represented in congress by a democrat. In the campaign of 1884 he was doubtful of success, but declared that, having been selected by the convention as its candidate,

it was his duty as a republican to make the best fight possible, even if he were certain to be defeated. He would have been elected if some disaffected members of the party had not been lukewarm in their support.

He was appointed governor of the territory of New Mexico in 1889, and served in that position for four years, until the national administration passed over to the democratic party. Of his administration as governor, it is sufficient to say that it was creditable to him and of benefit to New Mexico. It will be recalled that during that period, in 1891, the public school system much as it exists today, was created by legislative action, largely due to his influence as our chief executive. Animated by a regard for the historic past, and by what seemed to him to be the natural fitness of things, he made his residence while governor in this Old Palace of the Governors under Spanish, Mexican and American governments, where we now stand, and, with the assistance of his brilliantly gifted wife, made it the scene of social functions of the most varied and ornate character.

This naturally leads me to say a word about his wife, who survives him, Mary Catharine Beardsley, daughter of a distinguished officer in the Union army during the great Civil War, of Oswego, New York, connected with many of the prominent families of that historic region of north central New York, as to her must be given the principal credit of the brilliant social success of her husband's administration as governor.

One of the most important and enduring achievements of Governor Prince was the creation by him in 1909, of the Spanish-American Normal School, which is located at El Rito. I am told that this school has been of great and most beneficial importance to the development of our educational facilities. For several years after this school was established he was president of its governing board, and many of his friends felt grieved and aggrieved that he was not restored to that board by the governor under the last republican administration, in 1921, and were inclined to consider that the failure so to restore him was a sin of omission of that administration, as that school which he had created was very dear to his heart, and he was then still in perfect mental vigor, as indeed he remained up to the time of his death, and with sufficient physical strength to discharge the duties of the position with benefit to the public interest.

Coming now to the subject of our own society, it may truthfully be said that of all his varied interests and activities in many fields, only a few of which have been touched upon in what I have set forth, there was nothing which became so thoroughly a part of his life, and so engrossed and permeated

his mind and almost every thought, as did this society and all matters connected with it.

The Historical Society of New Mexico was created by a special act of the legislative assembly of New Mexico on February 2, 1860, which was not long before the Civil War. What were its activities immediately after its creation, I do not know, but it is certain that during the war, and for years thereafter, it remained in a state of suspended animation until about 1880, when through the efforts of Governor Ritch, a man of high character with imagination and ideals for the future, the society was reorganized with Ritch as president. Right here, if time and your patience would permit, I would like to expatiate at length upon the great value of imagination, which is not, by the generality of people, even yet thoroughly appreciated, but without which nothing great has ever been accomplished in art, science, literature, philosophy, religion or government, but being of a kind and benevolent disposition, I forbear.

Governor Ritch at that time was able to do nothing more than to lay some foundation for the future, but in 1883 Governor Prince became our president, a man who combined imagination with practical executive ability, and he soon infused life into us. He gave his time, varied research, and even his private means to the acquisition of objects of historical interest. Almost everything in our present collections, is due to his personal exertions, whether it be from Indian, Mexican, Spanish or American sources. We may well feel some pride in what has been accomplished, but we should not forget that but little is due to our individual efforts, or to our collective efforts as a society, and that nearly all is due to our late president, L. Bradford Prince, after he took charge of our interests and put some life into us, beginning the arduous work of collecting objects of historic interest from all available sources, the work of arranging these acquisitions in presentable shape being in itself a task of great difficulty. In this part of the work he had the valuable assistance of Mrs. Prince, as much interested as he, who arranged, classified and labeled with her own hands the greatly diversified objects, and arranged them appropriately in cases and shelves, many of which were the creations of her own zealous and skillful hands.

In grateful remembrance of that great man and his exertions, we should strive to preserve, as he always sought, the identity of this society and its collections, and I call upon all of you to join in efforts to accomplish that purpose, first of which should be some intelligent effort toward increasing our membership.

Before closing I feel impelled to recur to what I earlier referred to, and that is the personality of our departed and

beloved president. He was of most distinguished ancestry, as far as ancestry can go in our comparatively young country, as may be apparent from the fact that he was a member of such societies as the Sons of the Revolution, the Order of the Cincinnati, the Mayflower Descendants, of the Colonial Wars, and of the War of 1812.

He was a direct lineal descendant of William Bradford, who came over in the Mayflower in 1620, and was governor of the Plymouth colony from the spring of 1621 until shortly before his death in 1757, with the exception of five years, 1633, 1634, 1636, 1638, and 1644.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says of him:

“Bradford’s rule was firm and judicious, and to his guidance more than that of any other man the prosperity of the Plymouth colony was due. His tact and kindness in dealing with the Indians helped to relieve the colony from conflicts with which almost every other settlement was afflicted.”

To those who believe in the influence of heredity, there must seem to be found in L. Bradford Prince a survival of the traits and temperament of William Bradford. He had the “tact and kindness” in dealing with all kinds of men which William Bradford had “in dealing with the Indians.” He was most human and humane in all relations of life, and in Shakespearean language, you may all well join me in saying,

“He was a man, take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again.”

Resolutions of the Board of Regents of the State Museum

WHEREAS, in due course of nature, and ripe in years and honors, the earthly life of Hon. L. Bradford Prince, President of the Historical Society of New Mexico, ended December 8, 1922, thus forever stilling the compelling call of duty, and the urge of helpful service to his fellows. Like autumn fruit, he lingered long and it was even wondered at that he dropped no sooner. Nature seemed to have wound him up for four score years, yet ran he freely on three winters more; until, like a clock worn out with eating Time, the wheels of weary life at last stood still.

Born in Flushing, New York, July 3, 1840, of a long line of illustrious, one hundred per cent American ancestors, he measured up completely to their standards of citizenship, during his many years of active life and service to his fellow-citizens, in his native state of New York, his adopted state of New Mexico, and to the Republic at large. Early in life he developed an aptitude for political matters. By persistent, toilsome effort, he stored his splendid intellect with valuable knowledge. He graduated from the Columbia Law School.

While still a young man, he became interested in politics. He was a delegate to all the state conventions in New York, from 1866 to 1878, and was elected a delegate to the National Republican convention which nominated General Grant for President. The following year he became a member of the New York State Republican Committee. In 1870, '71, '72, '73 and '74, he was a member of the New York Assembly, and in 1875, was elected to the State Senate by an overwhelming majority. His public service there was highly honorable and splendidly useful.

Coming to New Mexico in the later seventies, he immediately took great interest in this, then territory, and soon came to the front as one of the most influential advocates of statehood. In 1878, he was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Mexico, by President Rutherford B. Hayes. He served in that capacity until May, 1882, when he resigned. The efficiency and impartiality of his administration as Chief Justice were approved by the business interests of the territory. He showed a remarkable capacity for expediting business that came before the Court.

"And he judged therein as a just man should;
His words were wise and his rule was good."

There was no time after he became a citizen of New Mexico that he was not foremost in the ranks of our citizens, doing his utmost, at home and abroad, for the welfare and prosperity of the people. He framed the act under which the Bureau of Immigration was organized. As early as 1881, he prepared a compilation of the laws of New Mexico. In 1883, he became President of the Historical Society of New Mexico. For years he was identified, either as officer or member, with the Trans-Mississippi and National Irrigation Congresses, where he accomplished much for the best interests of the entire west.

In the spring of 1889, President Benjamin Harrison appointed Hon. L. Bradford Prince governor of New Mexico. His administration of the affairs of the territory, while governor, was characterized by its progressive spirit, always having in view the educational, social and industrial advancement of the territory. Socially, no occupant of the old Palace of the Governors, before or since, so elaborately entertained the people of all classes. His wife, Mrs. Mary C. Prince, nee Beardsley, of Oswego, New York, a descendant of one of the most prominent families of that state, was a charming hostess, and a great favorite with the guests on these occasions.

After retiring from the office of governor, Governor Prince practiced his profession in the courts of New Mexico, devoting considerable time to horticultural pursuits, maintaining his legal residence in Rio Arriba County, near Chamita. From this county he became a member of the legislative council, in the 38th legislative assembly.

But now his work is finished. He has gone to a well earned rest. His reward is to be that of the faithful. We shall miss him. But his good works will live as long as enlightened citizenship stands ready to offer up the supreme sacrifice, on the altar of freedom. The key to his life was service. His philosophy of life was helpfulness. He accepted the fundamental truth that he who serves best is greatest among us, and he who serves well shall indeed be well served in his own soul.

He felt that representative government comes to an end when outside influence of any kind is substituted for the judgment of the representative. He deplored the unsound social and economical theories that deluge our country from time to time, and felt that they are not the progeny of stalwart men and women; that sound bodies do not breed unsound doctrine. That along with a vigorous physical training, should go a mental calisthenics for creating healthful thoughts, and that after all, it must be remembered that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

He held that government is not—must not be—a cold, impersonal machine, but a real, genuine, human agency, appeal-

ing to reason, satisfying the heart, full of mercy, assisting the good, resisting the wrong, delivering the weak from any imposition of the strong. That this is not paternalism, is not servitude imposed from without, but freedom of a righteous, self-direction from within. That laws are not manufactured, are not imposed; but are rules of action, based upon the principles of eternal Truth; and that there is no greater service this Republic can render the oppressed of the earth than to maintain inviolate the freedom of its own citizens..

He had complete faith in the moral power of the United States. He believed that the nation with the greatest moral power will win; that this power gave us independence under Washington and freedom under Lincoln. That here, in the United States, right has never lost, and wrong has never won. However powerful the forces of evil may appear, there are somewhere, more powerful forces of righteousness. That we have a priceless heritage of confidence and courage, and that justice is our might. With our late lamented President Harding, he proclaimed Americanism and acclaimed America, in the spirit of the Republic.

Like other great Americans, he thanked God that the spirit of a free people can be created, animated and cheered out of the storehouse of its historic recollections. He thanked God that the exemplars of patriotic virtue have abounded in our own country, on our own soil; that strains of the noblest sentiment that ever swelled in the breast of man are breathing to us out of every page of our country's history, in the native eloquence of our native tongue; that the Colonial and Provincial Councils of America exhibit to us models of the spirit and character which gave Greece and Rome their name and their praise among nations.

His interpretation of patriotism included more than a willingness and readiness to fight and die for one's country and its institutions. He believed that if a man loves his country and is true to her institutions, and is affectionately concerned for their quality and permanence, there will be something which he will be all the time doing in her behalf. To his way of thinking, going to war is only a small and incidental part of the matter. He felt that what our country needs most is men who will *live* for her, and during all of her times of peace, work for the consummation of her noble ideals.

He believed that the spirit of nationalism is essential to the perpetuity of this Republic. That such a spirit is as the sun in the heavens, diffusing light and warmth, and by its subtle influence holding the planets in their orbits and preserving the harmony of the universe. So he maintained that the sentiment of nationality in a people diffuses life and protection in

every direction, holding the faces of Americans always toward their homes, and preserving the harmony of all. He cherished the idea that while the states have their rights, sacred and inviolable, which we should guard with untiring vigilance, never permitting an encroachment upon them, and ever remembering that such encroachment is as much a violation of the Constitution of the United States as to encroach upon the rights of the general government, still we should ever bear in mind that the states are but subordinate parts of one great nation, that the nation is over all, even as God is over the universe.

Longfellow had Governor Prince's type in mind when he wrote:

“The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.”

THEREFORE, Be it Resolved, that in the death of Hon. L. Bradford Prince, New Mexico has sustained an irreparable loss; that Santa Fe has lost one of its most illustrious, useful and patriotic citizens, and that the great republic of the United States is vastly poorer because of his passing.

Resolved, That the Board of Regents of the State Museum extend to his bereaved wife and family its sincere and heartfelt sympathy, in this day of their affliction, and,

Resolved, That these resolutions be spread upon the records of the Board of Regents of the State Museum of New Mexico, and that a copy be presented to the widow of the late Hon. L. Bradford Prince.

RALPH E. TWITCHELL, Chairman
FRANK SPRINGER
JNO. R. McFIE
N. B. LAUGHLIN
J. L. SELIGMAN.
Committee.

